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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE GROUP INTELLIGENCE REPORT

COUNTRY Czechoslovakia/USSR

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SUBJECT Letter from Gottwald to Stalin on Czechoslovak Economy; Soviet Demands for Steel Products

INFO.

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ORIGIN

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SUPPLEMENT

1. On 25 October 1947, Loebl, who heads the Eastern Trade Division in the Czechoslovak Ministry for Foreign Trade, and Jan Fierlinger, also of that Ministry, left for Moscow with a personal letter to Stalin from Prime Minister Gottwald. This letter was to the effect that the Czechoslovaks either must have credits equivalent to five billion crowns to cover imports, mainly food stuffs, this winter or else the USSR must agree for Czechoslovakia to export more basic steel products against another foreign exchange. Only by one of these means can national economy and the position of the Communist Party in Czechoslovakia be saved.

2. [REDACTED] Gottwald asked President Benes also to add his signature to the letter, but the latter refused.

3. The Soviets are demanding that Czechoslovakia supply them with 100,000 metric tons of oil piping, which the Czechoslovaks normally sell to the Dutch East Indies. In addition, the Soviets want 10,000 tons of galvanized sheet metal, normally sold to Sweden and Switzerland, and 6,000 tons of electrical sheet, which Czechoslovakia has previously sold almost exclusively to Switzerland. In each category Soviet demands represent 100% or more of the total Czechoslovak output.

4. Total Soviet demands on Czechoslovakia amount to one million metric tons of steel products, including 100,000 tons of rails, 40,000 tons of small rolling rails, and 25,000 tons of locomotive tubing.

(Washington Comment: [REDACTED] Loebl reported that during his mid-October trade discussions in Moscow, Mikoyan threatened not to deliver the wheat already promised to Czechoslovakia by Moscow unless the 100,000 tons of oil piping are produced and delivered to the USSR at the soonest possible date.)

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CLASSIFICATION

This document is hereby regraded to CONFIDENTIAL in accordance with the letter of 16 October 1978 from the Director of Central Intelligence to the Archivist of the United States.
Next Review Date: 2008